

## Don't just vote: Vote Smart

BY SARIAH ARMSTRONG

Vote for me! I'll cure cancer! Vote for me! I'm awesome!

So many promises, so much propaganda. What's a concerned citizen to do?

If only there were a disinterested party to offer advice - one that would research the candidates, one that would present their views and records to help voters choose, one that would refuse to accept donations from political parties.

Hey, that's Project Vote Smart!

Vote Smart is a Montana-based research group that's dedicated to giving the average voter all the information necessary to make an informed decision, free of political advertising.

Vote Smart's founder, Richard Kimball, traces the origin of this project back to 1986 when he was campaigning for U.S. Senate and found himself ending a debate by saying:

"Understand what we do to you; we spend all of our time raising money, often from strangers we do not even know.

"Then we spend it in three specific ways: First we measure you, what it is you want to purchase in the political marketplace - just like Campbell's soup or Kellogg's cereal. Next we hire some consultants who know how to tailor our image to fit what we sell.

"Lastly, we bombard you with the meaningless, issueless, emotional nonsense that is always the result, and whichever one of us does that best will win."

So, Kimball says, he wanted to "ensure that citizens had at least one independent source to easily acquire accurate information about those who govern or those who wish to replace those who do."

The Project Vote Smart Web site creates and presents a detailed "application of employment" for each candidate, including background and education, references, and evaluation of their previous work experience.

Most importantly, Kimball says, "We will not accept funding from corporations ... or any organization that support or oppose candidates or issues."

The project is paid for by the American people. It is supported not only by employees, but also by thousands of volunteers and interns.

Project Vote Smart features a profile page for each candidate, which contains a basic biography, voting records, quotes, financial records, interest-group ratings, and an issue position test.

All of this information is loaded on the Web site, [vote-smart.org](http://vote-smart.org). There is

*Continued on Page 2*



FILE PHOTO BY LUIZ ARDUINI

*Members of the FSC Dance Club rehearse for months before they take the stage in the annual spring show.*

## Dancers leap into action

BY JAMES TIRABASSI  
AND CAROLEE MOORE

Marching to the beat of their own drum, the Fitchburg State College Dance Club members are gearing up for their annual spring dance show on April 2 and 4.

"Rhythm of the Night" is the theme for this event, which will showcase more than

two dozen performances in styles as diverse as jazz funk, reggae and hip-hop.

Preparations for this spring show have been going on for months, and members are eager to perform with the lights and the music.

"It's an overwhelming, exciting feeling. It's something different, it feels like you are showing the audience another side

of you," says Dance Club member Peggy Ofori-Atta.

Dance Club President Jessie Fisher says the group has been an important part of her college experience. "I am a senior, and I have been [part of this club] since my freshman year," Fisher says

*Continued on Page 2*

## Gang life sharpens 'Angles'

BY AMANDA ROY

"I'm just a small white boy who happens to be in the wrong place at the wrong time ... a lot of the time."

That's how FSC student Rob Bartolome explains his adventures in New Bedford - a place that has, however, given him the material to launch his career.

The aspiring filmmaker has created an online TV show, "Angles," set on the grittier side of his hometown. According to Bartolome's publicity materials, the show "follows a small gang of friends, striving in the 'hood of New Bedford and finding hope in their culture, companionship, and lifelong dreams."

New Bedford, Bartolome says, is a city of under 100,000 residents known for its history as a whaling town.

"New Bedford is beautiful," Bartolome says. "It's right on the water. It used to be one of the richest towns in America."

Now, says Bartolome, it's about 50 percent 'hood.

"It's dangerous, you know. You get caught up, swept up by the gangs, the violence, the lifestyle."

In a sense, Bartolome grew up in two



*Street gangs form the focus of "Angles," an online TV series by FSC student Rob Bartolome.*

*Continued on Page 2*





FILE PHOTO BY LUIZ ARDUINI  
Performers seem to take flight at FSC's Dance Club show.

## Dancers leap into action

Continued from Page 1

Many of her fellow students would seem to agree - the club, which is run by and for students, is the largest on campus with well over 100 members. And the spring show, also run by and for students, has become one of the most popular events on campus.

"The show has or almost sold out every year," Fisher says.

The FSC Dance Club's annual winter show, held in December, is a fund-raiser for the bigger, more extravagant show in April.

"The difference between the winter show and the spring show is that the winter show is a fund-raiser with less performances, but the spring show is bigger with a DJ and lights, more detailed costumes, and it includes all 29 classes," Fisher says.

Fisher and her fellow Dance Club members say there are many positives to being involved with this club. The Dance Club is a good way to stay busy while staying in shape, for example, because it puts the emphasis on fun while still delivering a workout. Also, the Dance Club requires commitment - some of the members dance in more than one group, so they are required to dance for many hours a week. Being in the club also teaches discipline as far as having to show up and practice - good skills for students to have.

The FSC Dance Club's "Rhythm of the Night" show will be held on April 3 at 6 p.m. and on April 5 at 3 p.m. in Weston Auditorium. Tickets cost \$3 with FSC OneCard; \$5 for the general public and at the door

Continued from Page 1

different worlds. There was the "nicer" half of New Bedford where he grew up. And there was the gang life and urban violence he became aware of through friends at New Bedford High School.

"You meet different people in school, make a few phone calls, go over to people's houses and you're seeing things you've never seen before," Bartolome says.

"There is so much culture in New Bedford. There are a lot of Portuguese and Puerto Rican families," he said.

These demographics can be seen in Bartolome's show "Angles," an amalgam of the experiences Bartolome has seen and heard about from being involved in the 'hood of New Bedford.

"The main character is Teddy," Bartolome says of his show. "His story is kind of like mine.

"He just gets caught up, you know? One minute he's sitting in a house with these guys, the next he's watching them beat the crap out of some guy because he lied. It's a sad story."

"Angles," which Bartolome writes and directs, is meant to offer a rough and honest look at what really goes on in a seemingly quiet, middle-class whaling city.

Gang violence is a part of life for many in New Bedford, which has seen around 17 unsolved homicides since 2000, Bartolome says.

It has even caught national attention, being featured on the television show "America's Most Wanted" for three unsolved murders from 2001, 2005 and 2006.

Unfortunately, Bartolome says, the show claimed that these cases got the fewest call-ins with leads to suspects in the show's history, which makes some sort of statement about the gang activity in the area.

Bartolome says most violent crimes in New Bedford are linked to a gang feud between the United Front Housing Project and Monty Park gangs, located in the south and west ends of the city, respectively.



Rob Bartolome, center, works with cast members of his online TV series "Angles."

The lifestyle, commitment, brotherhood and violence associated with gang life in New Bedford is detailed in Bartolome's show "Angles," where viewers follow the main character Teddy as he sinks deeper into the 'hood of New Bedford.

Other gang characters in "Angles" include Luis, a talented recording artist with a studio in his basement; Manny, the softer character and link between Teddy and the 'hood; and Z, the tough gangster, who is skeptical of Teddy being in his territory.

"Angles" doesn't focus entirely on gang violence,

however. Episode 2, titled "Chronic," digs into the drug issues that surround the characters as well.

Beginning with one member ripping the jewelry out of another's ear, it shows the

process, addiction and dangerous downward spiral that the characters and real citizens of New Bedford deal with on a daily basis.

The storyline is gritty, and Bartolome says that serve the purpose of his series.

"It's a shame more people don't know what it's really like, rolling with the boys, living the life," Bartolome says.

"We capture the real emotion, and that's what's so good about it."

The witty and friendly dialog between the characters provides a counterpoint to the violence and intensity of the fights and drug dealing.

The sounds of children playing and laughing are heard as characters come and go from drug dealing, drug using, and beating to a pulp an unfortunate soul who wronged the gang.

Pistol whipping, music recording, laughing, hooking up, and throwing down are all pieces of the New Bedford 'hood puzzle.

Bartolome hopes to reach those who know nothing of the life he has led and documents on "Angles."

To find out more, visit [www.myspace.com/anglestv](http://www.myspace.com/anglestv).

*"He just gets caught up, you know? One minute he's sitting in a house with these guys, the next he's watching them beat the crap out of some guy because he lied. It's a sad story."*

- Rob Bartolome



Quartetto Gelato is set to perform an Italian-themed concert, "Neapolitan Nights," on April 11 at 8 p.m. in Weston Auditorium. Tickets are \$22 for the general public; \$20 for FSC faculty, staff and senior citizens; \$7 for FSC students and those under 18.

## Voters turn to Internet as they try for smart choice

Continued from Page 1

also a hotline to call for additional help.

Project Vote Smart makes the setup as simple to use as possible; voters can search by the name of the candidate, the position, or even by state or zip code.

However, not every candidate is covered.

It is mostly smaller campaigns that are left out, those running for state or city office.

"The Project is nowhere near maturity," Kimball says.

This is surprising, since the site had several million hits daily during election time last year.

Kimball continues, "Eighty-seven percent of the country still has no idea that this effort is being made and thus cannot use it."

But the word is spreading, as citizens learn about this opportunity to Vote Smart.



# PHENOMenal teamwork on agenda

BY LEANNE BELGIORNO

Fix it! Fund it! Afford it! Helping students succeed is what they do.

The Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts is a brand-new coalition that brings together the many communities of higher education. Between students, faculty, staff, and alumni, this affects about 500,000 people.

Lisa Field, clerk of PHENOM, works in the Fitchburg State College library and is also the president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. She brings a lot to the table when it comes to getting people involved and informed about PHENOM.

"Eventually, PHENOM hopes that by awaking the sleeping giant and having a strong coalition going in there, it's not really a question that legislators really know there is a powerful voice behind PHENOM," said Field.

Many of those voices will be heard from 3 to 4:30 p.m. on March 31, when PHENOM holds a public hearing on affordability and accessibility in the M&M Lounge of the Hammond Building. Students are invited to share their concerns over issues such as rising costs, financial aid, debt, and career choices. State legislators, college officials, and leaders of PHENOM have

*"We are asking students to come and give testimony to a panel about how they pay their college bills ... They can tell us what the issues are and we make sure the issues are heard at the table."*

- Lisa Field

been invited to hear what the students are saying.

"We are asking students to come and give testimony to a panel about how they pay their college bills," said Field. "Students are the most important facet of PHENOM. If they get involved, they can tell us what the issues are and we make sure the issues are heard at the table."

The new PHENOMobile, filled with information on PHENOM and decorated by art students, will travel to the 15 community colleges, nine state colleges, and five UMass campuses to further the PHENOM campaign. It will be parked on the FSC quad during the March 31 affordability hearing.

Before PHENOM was started in February 2007, Field said, the different constituencies of higher education used to fight over funding that each segment received

from the legislature. PHENOM's goal is to bring them together and unite them around common issues.

"We're trying to organize our own PHENOM counsel at Fitchburg State College - trying to be diverse and inclusive to make sure that our needs are not only met on the statewide level, but also the needs of FSC are on the legislative agenda," said Field.

Field explained that PHENOM follows five key principles: They are here to help fund higher education; to make public higher education more affordable; to make it more accessible; to hire more faculty and staff; and to honor and expand the democratic institutions of public higher education.

"It is important that all students within the commonwealth can afford to come to school," said Field.

PHENOM is also working with the student-led Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group to pass a bill regarding the unbundling of text books.

"Publishers bundle them together so it's not just buying a textbook for \$25 - it's a workbook, textbook, CD and all this stuff ends up being \$100 to \$200," Field explained. "That is ridiculous and students shouldn't have to worry about that. We try to make it as affordable as possible."

Another bill promoted by PHENOM involves \$3 billion of capital improvements at all the 29 institutions. Here at FSC, that would translate into a new science building. "We want to be the point person of public higher education so that when issues come out, PHENOM speaks for those half-million people," Field said.

There was a rally and lobbying event on Valentine's Day to kick off PHENOM's spring campaign.

"We are asking people within the higher education community to sign the postcards."

On April 16 they will be delivering the signed postcards from thousands of Massachusetts residents Statehouse representatives and state senators at a Statehouse rally. "We will bring them to the legislators and governor to show them that we're here and we're here to stay," said Field.

## Bookstore doesn't rack up profits

BY GARETT LANGER  
AND CAROLEE MOORE

If you are a student at Fitchburg State College, you probably know the financial burden of purchasing textbooks. On average, books cost between \$300 and \$400 per semester, depending on the student's major.

The high cost of textbooks has not led to a high regard for the campus bookstore among students.

What many fail to realize, though, is that the bookstore, like students, has expenses and financial woes.

In fact, a federal advisory committee last year published a report about high textbook prices, in which it said that bookstores "are also victims of the failure of this market, and blaming them for high textbook prices is not the answer."

The campus bookstore has been run since 1996 by the Follett Higher Education Group, the largest operator of college bookstores in North America.

The bookstore, like many others of its kind around the country, gets its books through end-of-semester buybacks, used-textbook wholesalers, and textbook publishers.

According to the National Association of College Stores, the bookstore is the last to profit from book sales, because on average 65.8 percent of the sticker price on new books goes back to the publisher, mostly to cover the development of the book and normal business expenses.

The author gets 11.8 percent in royalties, the freight company that ships the book

gets 1 percent, and then the bookstore is left with 21.4 percent of the profit.

Though this might seem to be a good percentage, it must cover the costs of operating a bookstore, including cleaning and repairs, shelving, office and storage equipment, security, checkout systems, and paying workers.

These costs tend to leave little to no profit for the bookstore itself.

This would explain the reason for a finished margin of 22.5 percent on new textbooks, and a 33 percent on used textbooks. A margin is the difference between the cost of the textbooks and the price that they are sold at.

Ever wondered why you never seem to get any money back for your used books, or why your refund is a meager exchange for a book that cost you hundreds of dollars?

Well, Mike Flynn, the bookstore manager, states that "books that are brought back from students for 50 percent of the original price are kept in the book store and re-sold as used books during the following semester.

"The remainders of the books [they] buy back are sent to a used-book wholesaler to be sold to other college and university bookstores."

The most important question that remains unanswered is the possibility of lowering the prices of textbooks in the bookstore.

"Yes, there are opportunities for textbook prices to be lowered, either through using less expensive editions or reducing the number of books being used," Flynn says.

He also advises students to try to pur-



STAFF FILE PHC TO

*School supplies, souvenirs, cards and candy supplement the sale of textbooks at FSC's campus bookstore.*

chase used books because they are in fact 25 percent less than prices of the new books.

As a result of the expensive books being sold in the bookstore, many students are opting to purchase their textbooks online and through private transactions with other students.

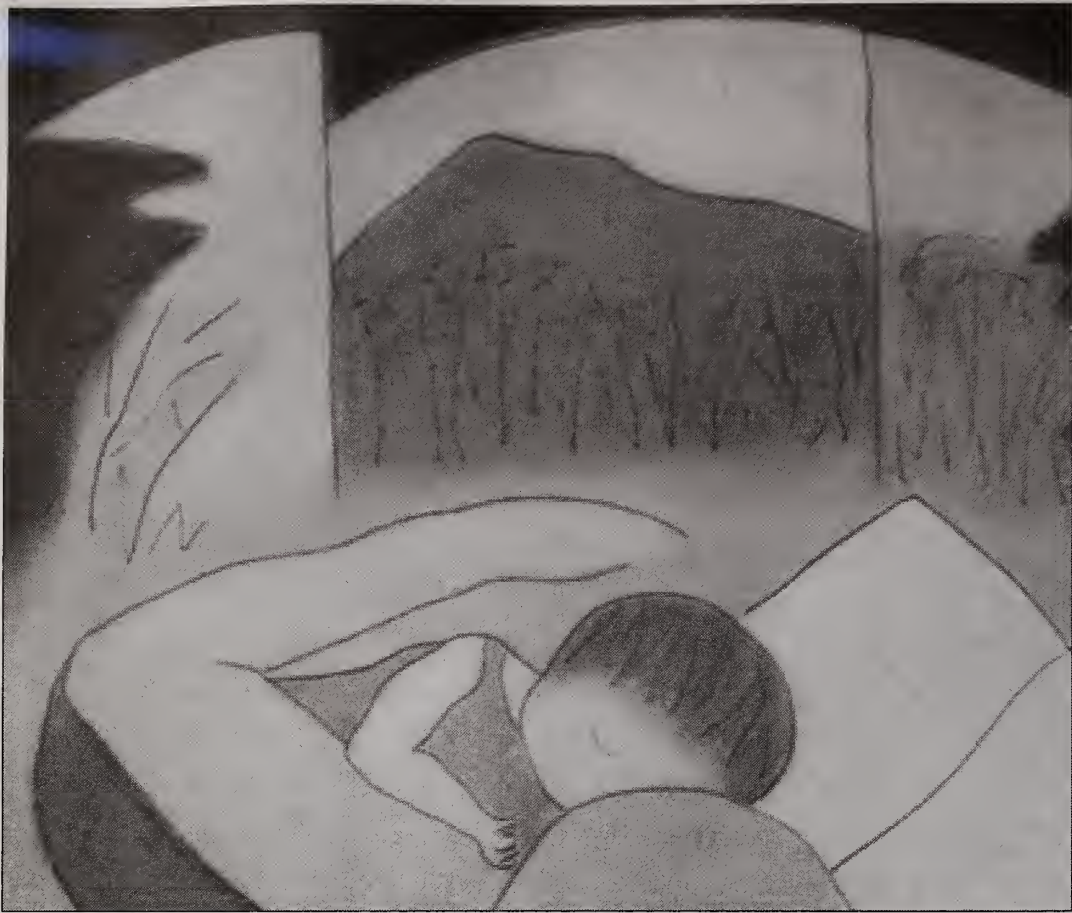
One would think this would greatly affect the bookstore's profit, but according to Flynn, "We have our own Internet site, efollett.com, which has done extremely well.

"The effects [of online purchasing] on the bookstore have been minimal."

So, the next time you go into the bookstore, instead of just complaining about their prices, do something.

The National Association of College Stores advises students to not buy books until after the first class meets, because some professors change their minds; to keep the shrink wrap on the books until you are sure the teacher will use the book; and to save your sales receipt, so you will have the option of returning the textbook for a refund.





*"Childscapes," described by Susan Wadsworth as "views of children from the mother's perspective," have been a focus of the FSC art professor's more recent works.*

# Faculty artist finds inspiration in family

BY NICK GIBSON

For the past 16 years, Professor Susan Wadsworth has taught in the humanities department at Fitchburg State College. However, teaching isn't her only passion.

As the mother of three children, she has felt her family influence other areas of her life.

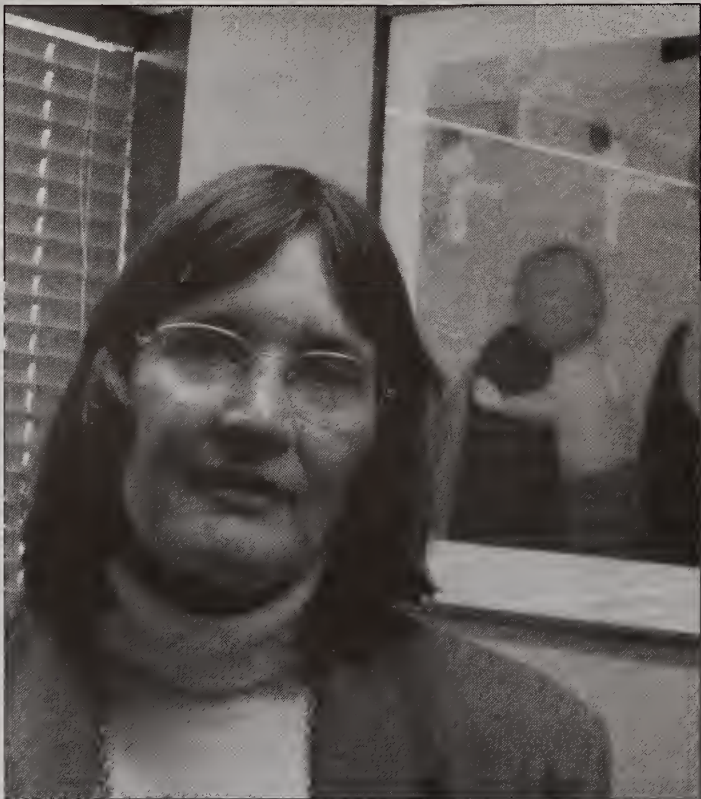
"I am inspired by art as well as motherhood," she says. "So, I decided to combine them."

Wadsworth gave a talk on her artwork earlier this semester, at FSC's Center for Teaching and Learning.

In a recent interview, she explained that she had created a form of art called "childscapes," which are quietly comforting pastel drawings of her children being held and cradled by their mother. The abstract forms come across as a "landscape" in muted tones. It takes a very close look to reveal the shapes as images of Wadsworth's children being observed from their mother's perspective.

For example, Wadsworth took her family to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. While there, a museum patron mused aloud to Wadsworth that her children are "a work of art." With that, Wadsworth opted to adapt that quote into a drawing, interpreting what was being observed at that moment. The result was "From a Mother's Point of View," one of her signature pieces incorporating her children as well as the museum's art.

Although they focus on her children, Wadsworth's artworks have a touch of her in them,



STAFF PHOTO BY SHAYNE TOSCANO  
*Professor Susan Wadsworth's children appear in her artwork.*

too. For instance, her kneecaps or forearms are visible in most of the "childscapes," depending on her point of view as she was visualizing the artwork.

Another aspect that gets incorporated into her artwork is her many trips to beautiful locations with breathtaking views of the seashore or mountains. In fact, she has taken her children to such far away places as France, where she observed the battlefields of Verdun and Normandy. Taking the view into consideration, she was moved to draw the monuments of war, combining them with the

beauty of the land surrounding them. These pieces of artwork are what she calls "battlescapes." She also has a series that she created called "From Childscapes to Battlescapes," in which both of these aspects can be seen.

To Wadsworth, many things are inspiring - including, of course, other famous artists, from Norman Rockwell to Jackson Pollock. These two painters have very different styles, but Wadsworth has found something to admire and emulate in each. As she explains, "I like the family aspect of Rockwell and the energy of Pollock."

# Curriculum gets major addition

BY CHARLES STERNAIMOLO

The first new major added to the FSC curriculum in 12 years, American studies, is set to be launched in Fall 2008.

The new major was first proposed almost three years ago by several FSC professors from the English and history departments.

Ben Railton, an assistant professor in the English department, has been actively involved in putting together the new major's curriculum.

In a recent interview in his cramped office in Miller Hall, Railton eagerly discussed his plan for American studies, which is awaiting final approval by the Board of Higher Education.

He said it will encourage students to analyze questions regarding the American Identity. Railton said that no other major at FSC is driven by the question of what it means to be an American. He added, "Asking that question is a big part of being an American college student."

Railton described the new American studies classes as places where students will be able to develop their own ideas of identity. The introductory class will be split into two main sections. The first will focus on the 1980s which, according to Railton, provide a great starting point for students to discuss being an American. Railton said that there are many ways to approach a decade "... movies, television, political speeches - everything from MTV and the Rubic's Cube to electronics, clothing styles, and the president. Social questions such as AIDS, economics, environmental issues, what was on television - it's all relevant to who we are." The second class section will

focus on each student's family genealogy over the past century or more, again encouraging students to explore and figure out what it means to be an American.

"It's not about what a bunch of scholars or professors dictate is the American identity," he said. "Students will explore and develop their own ideas."

Railton said he believes that the major is going to work not because a bunch of scholars and professors say it will, but because students will realize that it connects to skills and identity - and, he emphasized, "because it's practical."

He said the major will attract students interested in education because, "If you teach you're expected to know about broader practical topics such as family or even government - all at different levels."

The students who sign up for American studies will delve into these topics through projects related not just to America in general, but also to New England and even to the local community.

According to Railton, the major will overlap American literature and will be grounded in English and history.

The introductory class will be considered interdisciplinary, so students will not have to be registered as an American studies major to take the class.

Railton said the class will be a great way to add to a base of geology, art, environmental biology, economics, or political science. If approved, American studies will add three new courses to the FSC curriculum, and may also be offered as a minor. For more information regarding American studies, contact Railton on the second floor of Miller Hall.

*"It's not about what a bunch of scholars or professors dictate is the American identity. Students will explore and develop their own ideas."*

- Ben Railton

# Conference planned

Fitchburg State College's annual Leadership Conference will feature an author and advocate for international education and public health.

Kris Holloway will be the keynote speaker at this year's conference, to be held April 2 in the Hammond Campus Center. The keynote speech is at 5 p.m. in the Hammond Main Lounge and is free and open to the public.

Holloway, of Northampton, is the author of "Monique and the Mango Rains: Two Years with a Midwife in Mali."

This year's Leadership Conference is titled "Citizenship in the World."

FSC students are invited to attend afternoon sessions on topics such as study abroad and global economics, and global warming.





*Flowmentalz performed in the Underground, on campus.*

## Poet slams FSC

BY ANTHONY GEEHAN

He describes himself as “the etc.” of student activities.

“You’ve got your rock bands, comedians - and then, the etc.” slam poet Flowmentalz told the crowd in the Underground Pub during his performance here last month.

Flowmentalz, a New Jersey native, is a slam poet, a cross between early ‘80s hip-hop, beat lyrics, and spoken-word simplicity.

He has traveled this country from East Coast cities such as Boston, Hartford, and New York all the way to Alaska.

His poetry stretches from such serious subjects as his love/hate relationship with the United States, to constipation. He entertained a group of about 20 students before allowing for a very personal question-and-answer session.

“I started writing poetry after my junior-high English teacher assigned me some freewriting exercise,” Flow explained to

the students who had asked him how he got started.

He described his vast love for writers and performers, starting with such famous writers as F. Scott Fitzgerald and tracing forward all the way to old-school hip-hop legends such as Run D.M.C.

“I’m in love with the English language,” he said. “I love how our words sound and how they can flow together so well.”

Flowmentalz went on to answer questions about other aspect of his life, only being stingy on the topic of his true name. “Trade secret,” he joked to the crowd. “A lot of people had to die trying to find that out.”

Flowmentalz is most often seen in the New York area, where he performs in several smaller cafes and beat clubs. He is also currently on a college tour and hopes to make another round here to Fitchburg.

He can be found online at [www.myspace.com/flowmentalz](http://www.myspace.com/flowmentalz).

## April brings a world of events

The International Education Office at Fitchburg State College has expanded its annual International Week to a whole month’s worth of activities this year.

International Month begins on April 1 with the Parade of Flags at 10:45 a.m. in the Hammond Main Lounge. A Quebec study-abroad fair will begin after the parade, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Main Lounge. Visitors from 10 universities in Quebec will be speaking about study-abroad opportunities through the New England/Quebec Student Exchange Program. This event is for students, faculty and staff.

A Latino dance instruction event will be held on April 8 and 10 in the Dance Studio, from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. This event is for students, faculty and staff.

Another major event is the International Festival from 2 to 4 p.m. on April 16. Students, faculty and staff will host exhibits and activities from several countries at tables in the Hammond Main Lounge. This event is open to the public.

Several films are part of International Month. The South African film “Tsotsi” will be shown at 7:30 p.m. on April 9. The Indian films “Mr. and Mrs. Iyer” will be shown at 6:30 p.m. on April 14, and “Om Shanti Om” at 7:30 p.m. on April 18. “Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress,” will be shown at 7:30 p.m. on April 28. Each of these films will be shown in Ellis White Lecture Hall; admission is free.

Food will be part of the month’s festivities as well; Holmes Dining Hall will serve ethnic cuisine during lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Indian dishes will be served on April 7; Chinese food is scheduled for April 15, and Vietnamese food will be offered on April 23.

The Global Dinner for Fitchburg State faculty, staff and students will be held at 5 p.m. on April 25 in the Underground Pub. International students will cook and serve native dishes, and will also demonstrate cultural dances.

For more information, contact Dr. Clare O’Brien at (978) 665-3089.

## Music heats up Aubuchon kitchen

BY ANTHONY GEEHAN

The Aubuchon kitchen is place for RA meetings, movie and popcorn nights, and the occasional four-hour rock ‘n’ roll shows.

On March 10, a show put on by Fitchburg State College’s own radio station WXPL featured local band Elviso and Rhode Island-based band Stalemate. The two gave a group of 30 students and visitors a solid rock show that ran from 7 to 11 p.m.

“Two bands canceled due to the flu,” said Steven Bailey, vice president of WXPL. “Both Tony Bear and the Reaganauts had to step out of the show and we were afraid that the show would suffer because of it.”

As members of the first band, Elviso, stepped onstage to play their 10-song set list, they were told by the WXPL staff to take their time. Their set ran 40 minutes and they stepped off after saying, “Up next is Stalemate.”

After about 15 minutes of setup, lead singer Matthew DeMello stepped up to his keyboard and simply said, “We’re Stalemate, enjoy the show.”

What followed next would not be what most people expected. The band went on to play a nearly nonstop set, including two albums worth of original material and covers of such songs as “Just Like a Woman” by Bob Dylan and “Bulls on Parade” by Rage Against the Machine.

During the show, lead guitarist Cory



STAFF PHOTO BY ANTHONY GEEHAN

*The band Stalemate gives fans the full treatment in concert in the Aubuchon kitchen.*

Waldron wailed intercut guitar solos, bassist Geoffrey Rush struck pose after pose for the fans, drummer Kevin Perriera spent minutes playing deafening drum solos, and lead singer Matt spent as much time in the audience as he did with the band.

After the show was complete, the sweat-drenched crowd chanted “One more song, one more song!” until the band stopped

packing and played two more originals before calling it a night.

“We love playing Fitchburg,” DeMello said. “These kids are as excited to see us as we are to see them.”

Stalemate has made it a habit to tour through New England clubs and college campuses over the last three years. Their bio, show dates, and music can all be found at [www.myspace.com/stalemate](http://www.myspace.com/stalemate).

## ‘Othello’ puts drama in the spotlight

Shakespeare is in the spotlight this spring, as the Fitchburg State College English and industrial-technology departments present “Othello.”

The play will be performed at 7:30 p.m. April 2-4, 9 and 11. A matinee performance is scheduled for 2 p.m. on April 5, and a special commuter performance is at 6 p.m. on April 20.

All performances are at McKay Auditorium. Admission is free, but a suggested donation of \$7 is welcome.

“Othello,” written by William Shakespeare and directed by Devon Jencks, is

a play about love, jealousy, betrayal and racism.

It tells the story of a black general’s love for the beautiful white Venetian maiden Desdemona. After the two are married, Othello is dragged into a maelstrom of jealousy contrived by one of Shakespeare’s greatest villains, Iago.

Guest director Jencks holds a master’s of fine arts in performance from Brandeis University.

She has extensive Boston theater credits, including acting and staging Shakespeare

for The Publick Theatre, and acting, with Fitchburg State theater professor Richard McElvain, at The Nora Theatre in “Dublin Carol.”

Guest designer Matt McAdon of Northeastern University brings a sweeping Art Deco design to the production.

The cast of 18 will be fully costumed by Fitchburg State student designer Brittany Faulkner.

Lighting design is by student Aaron Kovachik.

For more information, contact McElvain at (978) 665-4032 or [mcelvain@fsc.edu](mailto:mcelvain@fsc.edu).



# Residents appreciate music, trivia and more

BY JEFF NIXON

This year, it's more than just a game show.

Resident Appreciation Week, April 6 to 9, has been expanded to include a variety of events such as a movie night, gaming night, FSC trivia contest, and band/karaoke night.

Events will kick off on April 6 at 7 p.m., with a screening of the movie "Eleventh

Hour" in Ellis White Lecture Hall, Hammond Building.

The second night, April 7, will be a gaming night. This will take place in the Recreation Center from 5 to 10 p.m.

Participants will have the chance to play \$2,500 worth of video games on systems including PlayStation 2, Nintendo Wii, and Nintendo 64.

There will also be free T-shirts and water.

The third night, April 8, will feature

FSC trivia in the Underground Pub from 8 to 10 p.m.

There will be four rounds of teams up to five. Trivia questions will include housing rules as well as FSC history. Prizes will be given to the winning team and there will also be up to four prize drawings.

April 9 will wrap up the week with band/karaoke night in the Underground Pub. The event will run from 9 p.m. to midnight and will have up to seven prize drawings.

Bands slated to play include Shakes,

Tony Bear, and Bynars.

Some of the prizes given out during the week will include gift cards to iTunes, Coldstone Creamers, TGI Fridays, Chili's, and MLB.com, as well as a 20-inch LCD TV and various gift baskets.

The senior RAs in charge of the event are Gina Grady, Kristen Boudreau, Kiel Szivos, Paige Suarbrick and Amy Burnett. Also helping with the event is AnnMarie Caprio Dunton and the building director's staff.

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# Start spreading the news: Point visits NY

A speech by a spy, a critique session and sightseeing were all on the agenda for two representatives of the Point, Fitchburg State College's student newspaper, during spring break in New York City.

Student editor Tim McCarthy and faculty adviser Doris Schmidt joined more than 1,000 other college journalists in Manhattan from March 16 to 18 for the College Media Advisers Spring National Convention.

The convention was off to a strong start with a keynote talk by Valerie Plame Wilson, former CIA covert operations officer. Plame Wilson's "outing" as a spy by senior White House and State Department officials led to an investigation by the Justice Department.

In her talk, Plame Wilson made connections between her career and those of journalists, for whom free speech and vetting of sources are equally important.

Each day from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. during the conference, McCarthy and Schmidt attended informative sessions presented by fellow journalism students and professionals, gathering information and ideas to share with Point staff members.

Among the topics covered were "Legal and ethical impact of blogs on news," "Cutting-edge newspaper design," "Meeting ethical challenges in student media," "Free speech on college campuses," "Covering campus crime," "Fact vs. opinions," "Managing deadlines," and "No budget? You can still market your newspaper."

They also submitted the Point for a constructive critique by a design specialist.

After sessions ended each day, there was time for sightseeing. CMA participants visited popular places including the Empire State Building, Statue of Liberty, World Trade Center site, Chinatown, Greenwich Village, and Times Square.



*New York City's skyline provides a dramatic backdrop for a college media conference.*



STAFF PHOTOS BY TIM MCCARTHY  
FSC student Tim McCarthy gets advice on recruiting staff from Nils Rosdahl, adviser for North Idaho College (photo above). Chinatown (photo right) and Times Square (far right) were among the favorite places for student journalists to visit.



## Photography students focus on successful show

The work of five Fitchburg State College photography students was included in a recent exhibit at the Photographic Resource Center at Boston University.

The students were featured as part of the annual 2008 Student Exhibition.

Representing Fitchburg State were senior Ashley Brito with

her photo "Ayer High," senior Brittany Durgin with her work "Chili Fest," Lauren Davieau with "Yvonne," junior Kiel Szivos with his photo "Corn Field, Templeton," and senior Stephanie Vieira with "Krakow, Poland."

The annual event is a showcase of academic diversity among the center's 17 institutional member schools.

Among the schools included

are Fitchburg State College, Art Institute of Boston at Lesley University, Boston University, Endicott College, Emerson College, Hallmark Institute of Photography, Massachusetts College of Art, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Also, Newbury College, New England Institute of Art, New England School of Photography, Northeastern University, School

of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Simmons College, University of Massachusetts at Lowell, and Wellesley College.

Work for the exhibit is selected by the schools themselves. Fitchburg State held a juried competition to select submissions.

Fitchburg State's Communications Media Department offers a four-year bachelor of science with

a concentration in photography in combination with a liberal arts education.

Offering well-equipped facilities, Fitchburg State College trains students in traditional and digital photography as well as in graphics, film, video, electronic media, and communications.

The department also offers an intensive national internship program.





PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY GAMING TODAY

Females are getting fully involved in the fun and frustration of gaming.

# Girls get their game on

BY J.D. POLLARD

Make room, guys - female gamers are on the rise. With the video-game subculture growing larger each year, it should be no surprise that the stereotype of gamers being male is decreasing. According to a recent CNN article by Matt West, 38 percent of gamers who play around 7.4 hours per week are female.

"I play Animal Crossing every day because [the game time] is in real time," says Sonya Sponberg, a senior at Fitchburg State College. "That's only for maybe 10 minutes; I'll play Harvest Moon for a half an hour to an hour each day, though ... sometimes maybe five hours," she says with a laugh.

According to West's article, most female gamers play social games such as The Sims, or hand-held systems, such as the Nintendo DS.

"I love my DS," says Erin Sorofman, a junior at Fitchburg State College. "You can take [it] anywhere, its one the greatest things I've ever bought."

The DS's portability makes it a top choice for gamers on the go, but what draws girls to the DS rather than a portable system such as the PSP?

Sorofman explains, "The games are really versatile; there's a wide range of games you can play. It has everything from educational to action, rather than just fighting and racing games."

Overall, female gamers seem to enjoy games with more in-depth plots. "There's okami," says Lauren Barbieri, a marine-biology major at the University of

*I'll play Harvest Moon for a half an hour to an hour each day ... sometimes maybe five hours."*

- Sonya Sponberg

New England in Maine, "which is great because its style is so unique, with the graphics based on Japanese paintings, and the mythology background, and it's still got great game-play and a good storyline."

As female gaming becomes more commonplace, games and game systems are being marketed toward women. The DS and the Sony Playstation's PSP have come out with new pink editions, while Microsoft has begun producing pink controllers for the Xbox 360, and third-party companies such as DreamGear have started to sell pink accessories for the Playstation 2.

"I think they're cute," says Sorofman, "but they're just not my favorite shade of pink. I ended up getting the white version of my DS."

While avid female gamers may not want to purchase pink, women with boyfriends or brothers who play video games often want a cute controller of their own so that they can join in on the fun.

The gaming community definitely has room for the female gamer. Game companies today recognize that males aren't the only ones playing their games. Females are becoming, more and more, a force in the gaming world. "I know of some girls who like to play games, to the extent of all my guy-friends. But, I don't really know any girls who *don't* like to the play games from time to time," says Sorofman. Recent commercials for the PSP and the Xbox 360 have featured women playing new video games or talking about the system features.

So what has turned women on to the world of video games? "I've been playing since I was a little girl," says Sorofman, who started playing games under the influence of her two brothers who are 10 years older than she is. "The first games I remember playing were Sonic and Mortal Kombat," she says.

Barbieri says her love of games started when she was about 6 years old. "SimLife came out in 1992 and I used to play it all the time and that's how I learned about basic ecological and environmental ideas," she says. "I'm pretty sure it put me on the path to where I am today."

Female gamers don't have to go far in order to find other female game players. While they have become much easier to find on a daily basis, many websites exist exclusively for the female gamer, including girlzclan.com. This group of women formed a gaming clan just for women. They specialize in online multiplayer games such as Counter Strike.

## In defense of George W.

BY SHANNI LAAKSONEN

I've been thinking about something lately. There seems to be a lot of negative feeling out there about George W. Bush, our president. I really do understand why. Our economy is in the toilet, we are at war, etc., etc. And although I am agreeing with these facts, I am also considering something else. Allow me to share.

Who among us can ever forget Sept. 11, 2001? I'll never forget it, either. What a truly horrific day in our nation's history.

And who among us would have liked to have been president of the United States on that particular day? There were so many questions out there as to who was truly behind the attacks. We all, of course, wanted answers. Many wanted blood.

Now, I've never thought that the president's job was all it's cracked up to be, even during "easier" times. It's not an easy task to lead the free world and to make everyone happy. What George W. has done is taken us to war against a terrorist-supporting country.

*Binge Thinking*

Yes, many questions are still out there about the depth and level of Iraq's involvement. I am not privy to the CIA playbook, so little-old-me has to rely on the news to find out the latest in the ongoing war against terror.

It does indeed seem like it is slow going for the Iraqi people to embrace the freedom we are trying to instill. And yes, the extreme tragedy of losing so many American soldiers over there gets harder and harder to bear.

But we ARE there, and our soldiers are fighting hard in the name of freedom. We must support them.

Moreover, we should support our president, too. There, I've said it.

I know, I know, he seems to have the air of a country bumpkin about him, and still we have to trust him to be our leader. But I remember vividly those dark days post 9/11, when we needed to hear from him so he could tell us what was going to be done.

I, along with everyone I knew, was at a bar drowning my sorrows. That very day I had heard a story about people getting into fender-benders and afterward getting out of their cars and hugging one another. We all had American flags taped to our car antennae, and were proudly sporting FDNY t-shirts.

It was while I was at that bar that Bush came on the air. Everyone stopped talking, moving. We all listened so closely to his words that we could have passed a quiz. It was intense. I needed our president at that moment. I had never felt more pride to be an American, and I needed him to tell us that we would be okay when all of us thought for sure that we wouldn't.

Time has passed and I can't remember what he said that night. And since then we have entered into this unpopular war. I remember bombing Afganistan and everybody clapping.

We all know that there are many things that happen that we don't hear about on the news. There is so much about the war that bothers me, of course, but one thing is for sure, and you can't argue with me on this one. For whatever evils the war has done and created, the biggest evil to me, an American, would be another 9/11. And hate George W. all you want, but there hasn't been another 9/11 yet. And that is, in fact why, I DO support him.

## Historian shares insight on Boston Italians

Author Stephen Puleo will discuss his latest book about Boston history at a New England Writers Series event at Fitchburg State College.

Puleo will present "The Boston Italians" on April 15 at 7:30 p.m. in Kent Recital Hall. A book signing will be held after Puleo's discussion. American Sign Language interpretation will be provided at the event.

The talk is part of CenterStage at the college, and is co-sponsored by the

Center for Italian Culture. Additional support from the New England Writers Series comes from the Roberta Fitzmaurice Connors '63 Scholarship Fund.

Tickets are \$10 for the general public; \$7 for Fitchburg State faculty, staff and seniors; and \$5 for Fitchburg State College students and those under 18. Tickets are available at the college's box office.

The story of the Boston Italians begins with their earliest years, when a largely illiterate and impoverished people in a

strange land recreated the bonds of village and region in the cramped quarters of the North End.

Focusing on this first and crucial Italian enclave, "The Boston Italians" describes the experience of Boston's Italian immigrants as they battled poverty, illiteracy, and prejudice explains their transformation into Italian Americans during the Depression and World War II; and chronicles their rich history in Boston up to the present day.